

walk down west from here to retrieve it. You can then follow a good trail east along a ridge to your car (one hour). Alternately, three tree rappels (20m, 25m, 50m) get you down to the pitch 15 rappel-anchors, then a 40m rap to the bivy. Descend the fixed line to the top of the pitch 13. A 40m traversing rappel gets you to the top of pitch 11. Rappels of 40m or less then get you to the ground.

Rack: Standard wires, double cams one-half to three inches, the three smallest tri-cams, slings, ten draws, and double ropes. I did not bring a larger piece, making the 16th pitch 5.9R, but I did wedge a few chockstones.

ALEX CATLIN

El Gigante, Los Sueños del Gigante. This 22-pitch route (5.11d/A0 or 5.12d) was established in mixed style, by Alex and Nathalie Catlin and Matt Greco, in December 2003. The route was cleaned on rappel over three weeks (and could use more). Many pitches required no bolts. Others are fully bolted, some bolts being drilled free, on lead, others on rappel. We believe the route justifies the style and hope that others who climb it will agree. A double set of cams and one dozen draws are needed. The approach is the same as for Man on Fire, and the first six pitches of the two routes coincide.

Pitch seven starts as Man on Fire's does but continues right past the anchors to the bivy bolts. Pitch eight follows a diagonal corner to a crack and the top of a pillar. Pitch nine takes a thin crack right around an arête to a hand crack. Pitch 10 passes a small roof. On pitch 11 climb an overhanging crack and traverse right from a bolt. Above, retreat would be complicated. Pitch 12 is another steep splitter crack. On pitch 13 follow a corner to a long ledge. Pitch 14 begins with a hard move to a thin crack that turns into a seam; eventually move right to a good bivy ledge. On pitch 15 we left fixed a short piece of cheater rope at the otherwise 5.12d crux. The next two pitches, in contrast to the crack pitches below, involve bolted pockets, and pitch 18 involves a traverse right to a bivy cave. On pitch 19 take the crack out the roof of the cave, then traverse right. Pitch 20 is more pocket climbing, with 2,000 feet of exposure. From a flat spot left of the belay (where you can leave your haul bag and spare rope, to be picked up on descent) finish the route with two pitches up the arête above. Descent: Scramble east from the summit to a saddle, and after retrieving your gear, follow the trail east to your car.

ALEX CATLIN

El Gigante, Bernat Pudent. Last summer we flew from Catalonia to Mexico. We had seen pictures of the impressive west face of El Gigante and our goal was to open a new route. Although June seemed too late to climb this sunny wall, we decided to try it. We fixed the first six pitches in three days, before we left base camp. The temperature was about 40-43°C from 12:00 to 18:00, and we hadn't enough bottles to pull up enough water, so we decided to climb in minimalist style, hauling less than 40kg of water and food, one portaledge, and the climbing gear. Planning to stay one week or less on the face, we had to open three or four pitches a day, so there wasn't time to manage heavy haulbags. As it turned out we needed seven days to reach the top. We placed 20 8mm bolts and 17 rivets for belays, hand-drilled, and three rivets in pitches, two of them to avoid loose rocks hanging over a belay. We didn't drill any holes for hooks. The route begins to the right of Faded Glory, near a small group of trees, and follows a crack system to a

half-moon-shaped roof, easily seen from the bottom, situated in the middle of the cliff. From this roof the route goes to the right, following a small ledge with sharp, spiky plants; you have to jump from plant to plant. After this the wall is less steep, and there is less aid climbing. The route has 26 pitches and a difficulty of 5.11c, with precarious protection and A3+. We named it Bernat Pudent (1,160m, ED+ 6c+[5.11c] A3+), Catalan for the Nezara prasina—thousands of these small, stinky insects filled the cracks.

As practical information we think that June is too late to climb El Gigante. During the last three days there were soft rains. If you want to climb on good rock, El Gigante isn't the place. If you need the help of local people to reach base camp or return from the top, we suggest contacting Don Santiago in Huajumar or Don Rafael in Las Estrellas. They are excellent people who are very helpful and not only interested in money.

DAVID FONT I VENTURA *and* JORDI SERVOSA I ROCA, *Catalonia*

NUEVO LEÓN

PARQUE NACIONAL CUMBRES DE MONTERREY

Trad at the Potrero Chico. The bolt Mecca of northeastern Mexico was profaned by a series of long trad routes this year. The rock's poor quality made these very bold adventures. Dane Bass and Sue from the Gunks started things off with The Scariest Ride in the Park (30 pitches, 5.9X), which starts at the overlook in Virgin Canyon. They finished this 3,000' ridge on their second attempt, taking two days. Paco Medina and Alejandro Garcés climbed the ridge above Stairway to Nowhere, calling it Robin Hood. We lack details of this ascent, but it is 5.10X, over 3,000' long, and uses the rappel descent of Time Wave Zero (a 22-pitch route by Jimmy Carse and partner). Finally, Alex and Nathalie Catlin climbed Devotion, which starts 30 feet right of Pride (14 pitches, 5.11d), in a style known as Potrero trad. The rules are to climb ground-up, on lead, with a drill but no hooks. The result is a fully bolted route and lots of excitement for the first ascensionists.

ALEX CATLIN

La Huasteca, Abuelo Fuego. Tatewari is a stunning 550-meter limestone wall in the Canon de Escaleras, near Monterrey. After the 2001 sport-climb first ascent by Carlos Garcia and Francisco Trad, in June 2002 a group of locals (Francisco Medina, Paul Vera, and I, Jimmy Carse) ascended a new route in traditional style. The route follows a prominent crack system, with an incredible rock-pillar bridge, formed by the pillar having toppled against the main wall on the fourth pitch. There are several bivy ledges. Four bolts were placed on lead, as well as anchors, using a hand drill. The main sources of pro were angles, Lost Arrows, stoppers, and a few tied-off bushes and palm trees. There was one aid pitch: lots of hook moves, with one bolt and a sketchy pin. There were several loose freeclimbing leads as well, with poor protection and no falls. Who knows if the pro would have held? We slept one night on natural ledges on pitch five, accompanied by Rafa Cornelius and Adrian "Orejo" who juggled behind us with food and beer. They bailed early the next morning, due to constant rockfall caused by us climbing above. This route went at 5.10X A3+, was led in 12 pitches of 40-60 meters, and was lots of fun.

JIMMY CARSE, *Team Tzolkin*